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UNCLAS AMMAN 001882

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

USDOC FOR 4520/ITA/MAC/ONE/COBERG  
TREASURY FOR MILLS, CHANG  
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TAGS: [ECON](#) [ECPS](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: TFI201: VENTING ON THE WEB: JORDAN INTERNET USE  
SURGES

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The two major Internet providers in Jordan report a sharp upsurge in Internet use, particularly email traffic, over the past week. Technical support managers said that sophisticated software is allowing users to access and download inflammatory TV news reports, which are then given broad circulation via email. Despite an increase in traffic that has at times reached 95% of capacity, providers report no problems providing uninterrupted service. END SUMMARY

2. (SBU) Hamed Ghamam, Technical Support Director for Cyberia, Jordan's largest internet provider, told us March 27 that Internet use had surged since the conflict with Iraq began one week ago. He said that while most users accessed the Web to check on the news throughout the day, there has been an unusually high increase in email traffic. Ghamam said that he was now receiving 50 emails per day, up from 20 as recently as last week. Judging by the content of emails he has received lately from contacts around the region, senders have become more sophisticated in their ability to download television news programs and "rebroadcast" them to friends and family. He said the messages he has received feature footage from Al Jazeera or Iraqi TV, showing particularly incendiary clips. Ghamam said that the tone of the mail has been "extremely angry and growing moreso day by day." He added that he has also seen an increase in individual calls for a boycott of American and British goods, but stressed that "there is no organized character to it as of yet."

3. (SBU) Likewise, Adel Uzaizi, Technical Support Manager for Batelco (the other leading ISP), said that his company has also seen a recent increase in traffic. He said that many subscribers take advantage of Internet access at work to read the news and send emails in reaction. He broadly echoed Ghamam's comments, and said that there was "lots of anger out there and this is the only way some people can vent." Uzaizi said that it was relatively easy, if one had the right software, which is easily obtainable, to pull newscasts right of the Internet and send them around. Uzaizi said, too, that mobile text messaging was being utilized the same way.

4. (SBU) Both managers said their networks can easily handle the traffic, although Ghamam said that at peak times, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. during the week, Cyberia had reached 95% of its capacity, up from 80% one week ago, with no problems. He said that levels of use are lowest on Friday and rise a bit on Saturday. Uzaizi said that Hashem One, the main link for the Internet in Jordan, is maintained by Jordan Telecom, and "has been pretty dependable" throughout busy times, such as the Eid holiday and Ramadan.

5. (SBU) COMMENT: As long as the war goes on, and probably after, Jordanians will use the Internet to vent their feelings and share news and opinions. Unless it is used to organize and incite violence, this medium is probably perceived by the Government of Jordan as a tolerable, and preferable, way for people to let off steam. We know of only one U.S.-based, Arabic website, [www.arabnews.com](#), that appears to be blocked by the GOJ for political content.  
GNEHM